

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2015 – 7:00 AM
JORDAN ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Chairman Paul Jamison; Members Adam Brooks*, Russ Gill, Greg Klein, Bev Martin, Roger Martin, Commissioner Kress Query (alternate appointed member); Emory Simmons*, John Urban, Town Manager Hazen Blodgett, Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ALSO PRESENT: Public Works Director CJ O'Neill, Transportation Advisory Committee Chair Matt Jones

ABSENT: Vice Chairman Tim Jones, Members Steve Thomson and Chamber Executive Director Tina Whitley (ex-officio)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jamison called the meeting to order at 7:00 am.

INVOCATION

Mr. Martin rendered an invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ms. Martin to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2015 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Martin and unanimously approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

BUSINESS SUMMIT DEBRIEF

The November 13th business summit was well-received. Attendance has fluctuated over the years – it has become more difficult to fill the room than it had been when the summits first started. Discussion on possible changes to future business summits ensued. There may need to be better advertising or methods of targeting attendees differently. Suggestions included inviting town Commissioners and board/committee chairs and members of The Quad (formerly known as the Four Town Alliance).

Mr. Urban suggested seeing if The Quad wanted to hold its own summit – perhaps in April or May 2016. Mr. Martin pointed out this would bring attention to The Quad as well and showcase how it can help promote communities and businesses. Mr. Blodgett will discuss this at the next Quad meeting in December and report back.

RED BRICK PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Mr. Urban reported on the public presentation held on November 17th. It went well and one of the highlights was the video produced by a video production company which showcases various downtown businesses and images

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from November's First Thursday event. A committee has been formed to handle First Thursday business so that the rest of Red Brick can focus on other areas. Marketing and branding is the next big step. Red Brick Partnership members will be making a presentation to the Board of Commissioners on November 23rd.

*Mr. Simmons arrived

THE QUAD (FOUR TOWN ALLIANCE) UPDATE

Mr. Blodgett reported on the Alliance's progress. The group performed a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the partner towns – Matthews, Mint Hill, Stallings and Indian Trail - and determined that the demographics are very similar for all four towns. Weaknesses include transportation issues, a lack of joint planning and a lack of destination locations. Opportunities include the idea of the area as a recreation destination, land for business development, shared municipal resources and regional road improvements. Threats include misaligned zoning and the lack of a common vision. Mr. Blodgett noted that there are newly elected officials who may not have the same vision going forward. The Quad staff members are still working on various aspects such as marketing and strengthening partnerships. The business summit would be a great idea for people to interact and see what they and their communities have in common.

The issue of becoming a recreation destination is an interesting one. Matthews is already a destination because of the Sportsplex; the question is what the other towns can bring to the table to create a regional destination. A regional conference center is another goal since currently there's no large meeting facility available. Educational institutions might be another avenue – it would be interesting to see if a school could be recruited to come to this area for higher education.

Currently each town is funding \$6,000 per year. Things are moving slowly but it's taking some time to get elected officials from all four communities on board. There will be an annual meeting in February to discuss the group's progress. It's likely that it would take 3-5 years before The Quad becomes a complete economic development entity.

*Mr. Brooks arrived

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATION EXCHANGE WITH TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Public Works Director CJ O'Neill and Transportation Advisory Committee Chair Matt Jones discussed various road projects around town. Buckley Way is now open and work is progressing on South Trade Street. Paving should begin around March. Campus Ridge Road is being graded now. The Highway 51 superstreet near Butler High School is progressing slowly. It's a state project and was supposed to be completed in October but it is uncertain when it will actually be completed. The South Trade Street culvert - another state project – is currently in the environmental phase and should be under construction starting around September 2016. The Weddington Road timeline currently calls for right of way acquisition in 2020 and construction starting in 2022 but that timeline is in flux and may change.

There was some discussion of the next focus for the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Mr. Jones explained they want to be more knowledgeable about development before it starts tying into roads – find out what's coming in and what kind of traffic patterns will result from that development. He said he understands that EDAC's opinions on development projects may be different from TAC's. He suggested including the discussion of transportation projects in EDAC's minutes or sending opinions or recommendations to the TAC and Board of

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Commissioners so all voices can be heard. People are always welcome to attend meetings to hear discussion first-hand as well.

Mr. Blodgett noted that staff is putting together budget and capital improvement suggestions for priorities including town roads. Some roads are very narrow and need to be improved, and connectivity is always important.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Blodgett reported on recent development projects. The proposed Pet suites application was denied. Current applications going through the process now include those for Pike Nursey at Devore Lane, the downtown streetscape, a charter school at Mount Harmony Church Road and an RFP for the vacant lot on Matthews Station Street. The proposed day care center at Park Center Drive is in the process of redoing their application. The changes are significant enough that a new public hearing will be called in February to review all the changes.

Mr. Jamison reported on recent information from the Charlotte Regional Visitor Authority (CRVA). The Bojangles Coliseum renovations are complete and it's ready again for hockey games. Discussion of room rates continues - room rates for hotels drives the tax that funds the CRVA.

Visitor software will be discussed at the January meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Gill noted that the new historic street signage in downtown Matthews looks great. Mr. Jamison noted that the Holiday Stroll is scheduled for December 5th. Mr. Jamison also thanked Mr. Simmons for service to the committee this year. He has done great work on the Chamber Board. Amy Carr of the Matthews Free Medical Clinic is the incoming President and will begin attending EDAC meetings in 2016. Mr. Jamison noted this is also Mr. Query's last meeting at the representative from the Board of Commissioners. He thanked Mr. Query for his work as well.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Martin to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Martin and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:48 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno
Town Clerk